

spig news

Newsletter of the AEJMC's Small Programs Interest Group

Summer 2007

SPIG expands journalists' experience and understanding

This is my farewell column as SPIG head and it's been a pleasure getting to know more SPIGERS and working to help ensure that AEJMC continues to meet our members' interests.

My most vivid memory from this past year is of riding around one December afternoon in the backseat of a New Orleans taxi, accompanied by SPIG Vice Heads Ron Hollander and John Jenks, seeing the devastation that Hurricane Katrina caused.

We were attending AEJMC's midwinter meeting to negotiate time slots for SPIG's panels at the 2007 convention. The chip auction, at which we would vie with the other divisions and interest groups for the best times, was set for the following day.

AEJMC had requested that we attend a training session that Saturday afternoon to learn how to use the new computer system for posting and reading research papers. However, AEJMC's leadership also had promised that in the coming months, there would be detailed instructions on how to use the system. We took them at their word and jumped into the cab. The reporter's instinct dies hard.

What we saw defied explanation. How could it be that more than a year after the hurricane hit, houses still were piles of sticks crushed by roofs holding them down like pressure cooker lids? How could so little construction be going on? Where were the people? Why did street after street look like Dresden after the Allied bombing? Where was our government in the time of this city's immense need?

As we drove through the city's Lower Ninth Ward, we noticed one soup kitchen, a handful of houses being remodeled, and one city electrical crew working on a utility line. But where were the bulldozers, ditch diggers, construction crews, and piles of new lumber and concrete blocks?

It was heartbreaking to see how this city that once was a playground for the entire nation waited ... and waited ... and waited for a rescue that apparently is not coming anytime soon.

The ride reinforced for me how important the media are to tell it like it is and to keep nipping at the heels of our government until it does the right thing. It was the media who showed us the frightened New Orleans residents clinging to their rooftops while our president told his Federal Emergency Management Agency director, "You're doing a good job, Brownie."

It was the media who reported that the government knew that Iraq wasn't involved in the World Trade Center bombings, but the U.S. launched war on Iraq, nevertheless.

It is the media who daily bear witness to what is happening on our planet, who sing the songs that maybe we don't want to hear but that we need to if we are to function as a democracy run by an enlightened citizenry.

As I rode in that taxi, I was sad to be a citizen of a country that shamelessly neglects our brothers and sisters who need help. But I was proud to be a journalist who has the First Amendment freedom and duty to write and speak about what I hear and see. I was proud to be sharing a cab with two fellow journalism professors



who daily bear witness in their classrooms about the rewards and responsibilities of journalism.

Participating in AEJMC and, especially, SPIG, has been a gift for me, renewing my enthusiasm for my craft, providing me with colleagues who share my problems and successes, and who collectively work for a better tomorrow.

I urge you all to be active in SPIG and AEJMC and to take pride that we are doing honest, important, and often joyful work. Thank you for this year.

-- Margo

Check out SPIG's updated Web site at AEJMC.org

Click on "About," then "Groups," then "Interest Groups," then "Small Programs Interest Group." Susan Lewis, our Web mistress, has done an excellent job.

Plan on joining SPIG for these sessions at AEJMC in Washington, D.C., Aug. 8 - 12

SPIG members have put together some dynamic panels for the 2007 annual AEJMC conference in Washington, D.C., which runs from Aug. 9-12 with preconference workshops on Aug. 8. SPIG's offerings include:

THURSDAY, Aug. 9

*** 1:30-3 p.m.** Writing for the New Media: Same as the Old? Some Rules for the Digital Road, co-sponsored by Community College Journalism Association. Moderating/Presiding: **John Hanc**, New York Institute of Technology
Panelists: **Jill Agostino**, news editor, nytimes.com

Beverly Bailey, Tulsa Community
John Capouya, former Newsweek magazine senior editor and author
Ron Hollander, Montclair State
Chip Scanlan, The Poynter Institute

*** 3:15- 4:45 p.m.** GIFT Poster Session, sponsored by: Community College Journalism Association, International Communication Division, Scholastic Journalism Division, and Small Programs Interest Group.
Single Syllable Shortcut

How to rewrite like a pro into (mostly) single syllables

Patricia Baldwin, North Carolina-Ashville
Set the Style

How to teach students how accuracy, fairness and word choice intersect

Andy Bechtel, North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Banana Split 2.0

How to teach innovation in a sweet way

Clyde Bentley, Missouri-Columbia

Once Upon a Times

How to use fairytales to teach beat reporting and review lead writing

S. Camille Broadway, Texas-Arlington

Get Out and "Glocalize"

How to seek out—and connect with—diverse sources

Susan Brockus, California State-Chico

What's On Your iPod?

How to integrate vodcasting into existing courses to enhance

the college experience for all

Patrice Clemson, Penn State

Bleachers of Fury

How to teach freedom of information through an interactive

role-playing slideshow

David Cuillier, Arizona

Lead Poker

How to teach the value of words

Juanita Darling, California State-Monterey

Bay

All Together Now

How to use 'Speed Dating' to increase learning and minimize conflicts

Douglas Fisher, South Carolina

Hearing Voices

How to help students learn the elements of voice and find their own

Ellen J. Gerl, Ohio

QQQ

How to generate discussion in a seminar course

Joel Geske, Iowa State

Sources of Diversity

How to broaden students' understanding of diversity using standard interview techniques

Steve Hallock, Southern Illinois-Carbondale

Painting a Target Audience Portrait

How to bring a target audience to life for advertising agency creatives

Daniel M. Haygood, Tennessee

Using Blogs for Community Learning

The intersection of Web 2.0 and convergence education

Susan Jacobson, Temple

Fostering Visual Creativity with Cre848

Brian K. Johnson, Illinois-Urbana-

Champaign

Style Stars

How to help students collaboratively learn and demonstrate the essence

of Associated Press style

Rick Kenney, Central Florida

T-shirt Ethics

How to engage students in learning ethical approaches

Susan Lewis, Abilene Christian

Don't Rely On Chicken Scratch

How to take notes quickly and accurately

Renee Martin-Kratzer, Florida

Caution: Media Convergence Zone Ahead

How to construct a student news blog centered on community reporting

Jennifer Mullins and Teresa Lamsam,

Nebraska-Omaha

Snowballing Sourcebook

How to introduce students to an ethnic neighborhood and help them build

a common sourcebook for reporting

Paul Niwa, Emerson

Are Your Students at Your College Following the News?

How to foster youths' understanding of current events, survey methods

and their own media consumption

Jennifer Rauch, Long Island

Breaking the College News Bubble

How to excite reporting and editing students about current events

Daniel Reimold, Ohio

Diversity Snapshot

How to ease students into writing about diversity with skill and sensibility

Carol Schwalbe, Arizona State

The Windup and the Pitch

How to motivate students to develop better story ideas and budget lines

Jeff South, Virginia Commonwealth

We All Have to Eat and Sleep

How to incorporate math into a reporting assignment

Kathleen Wickham, Mississippi

FRIDAY, Aug. 10

*** 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.**, Teaching Students to Recognize the Voices of the Silenced, co-sponsored by Religion and Media Interest Group

Moderating/Presiding: **Teresa Housel**, Hope

Panelists: **Cecile Holmes**, South Carolina

Michael Longinow, Biola

Vivian B. Martin, Central Connecticut State

Michael Ray Smith, Campbell

Shayla Thiel Stern, De Paul

*** 3:15-4:45 p.m.**, Hot Topics Panel: Media Coverage of the Tragedy at Virginia Tech: Rising to the Occasion, or Sinking to New Lows? Co-sponsored by Media Ethics Division.

Moderating/Presiding: **Terry A. Dalton**, McDaniel College

Panelists: **Kevin Corke**, correspondent, NBC News

Mark Morrison, New River Valley bureau chief, The Roanoke Times

Tracy Schmidt, reporter, Time magazine & Time.com

Bob Steele, The Poynter Institute

Amie Steele, Editor-in-Chief, the Collegiate Times at Virginia Tech

*** 5-6:30 p.m.**, Stretching the Shoestring:

Journalism Education on a Budget, co-sponsored by Community College

Journalism Association

Moderating/Presiding: **John Jenks**, Dominican

Panelists: **Beverly Bailey**, Tulsa

Robert Mercer, Cypress

Judith Pfeffer, Victory

Chris Vaughan, Santa Clara

Margo Wilson, California of Pennsylvania

*** 8:30-9:30ish p.m.**, Small Programs Interest Group Business Session: Members' Meeting. Election of officers.

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SPIG session to focus on highs and lows of reporting on shootings at Virginia Tech

by Terry Dalton

Until the morning of April 16, the subject of this year's hot topic session for the AEJMC convention in Washington was definitely up for grabs. Then, everything changed when 23-year-old Cho Seung-Hui turned the bucolic campus of Virginia Tech University into a war zone, leaving 33 people – mostly students – dead, including the shooter. It was one of the most horrific shooting incidents in U.S. history, and especially horrific because of its site. A few days later, after watching, reading and listening to a barrage of media coverage, Liz Skewes and I agreed that we had our topic: the highs and lows of the press's performance in covering the massacre at Blacksburg. Then came the harder part -- identifying and recruiting the five panelists.

More than anything else, we wanted a diverse panel that looked at the event from as many perspectives as possible. Not surprisingly, much like at Columbine in 1999, many of the most vexing questions about the coverage were ethical ones, not the least of which was NBC's decision to air disturbing video and photographs mailed to the network by Cho on the day of the shooting. We quickly agreed that

the best person to put those ethical issues in context and help us to understand them was Bob Steele of the Poynter Institute, one of the most gifted and oft-quoted analyst of media ethics in the country. When Bob said, "Yes, I'll do it" in late April, I knew we were off to a great start.

Now that we had our "referee" of sorts, we decided that the remainder of the panel should consist of news people who either provided or supervised the coverage. We had both been impressed by a young reporter from NBC News, Kevin Corke, who, I believe, furnished one of the earliest network reports of the shooting. Corke delighted us with his quick acceptance. Two down, three to go.

SPIG's John Jenks played a leading role in securing our third panelist, Tracy Schmidt, a former student of John's at Dominican University who now reports for both Time.com and Time magazine. John was very high on Tracy, including plaudits like: "Tracy has always been an incredibly self-motivated person. She picked up internships (ten in all!) like other people picked up lunch, ran the student newspaper, and managed to graduate in three years and wrangle herself

a gig at Time." Who could say no to that?

Panelist number four was near the center of the storm on that fateful Monday morning. As the New River Valley bureau chief of the Roanoke Times (the closest daily to Blacksburg), Mark Morrison helped coordinate a 20-person bureau that produced, under unusually difficult conditions, a stunning array of print, online and visual journalism, some of which he will share with us at the session.

Clearly, Liz and I were determined to include a staff member of the student newspaper at Va. Tech, The Collegiate Times, on the panel. The student-journalist who stepped forward was Amie Steele (no relation to Bob), editor-in-chief of the newspaper, a position that she had held for barely two weeks at the time of the shooting. Amie is mentioned prominently in Sherry Ricchiardi's article, "Hometown Horror," in the American Journalism Review.

We could not be happier with our panel, which we've titled, "Media Coverage of the Virginia Tech Tragedy: Rising to the Occasion, or Sinking to New Lows?" It will unfold on Friday, Aug. 10, from 3:15 to 4:45 p.m. See you there.

SPIG Milestones

Dr. Andrea Breemer Frantz received tenure and promotion to associate professor in April 2007 at Wilkes University.

SPIG Co-Vice Head, **Ron Hollander** of Montclair State, lectured on "The Holocaust and the Press: What Did we Know, and When?" at the Jewish Community Center in Bayonne, N.J., in May, as part of the Center's Leisure and Learning lecture series.

Rachele Kanigel, assistant professor of journalism at San Francisco

State University, is teaching storytelling in Italy this summer with the Institute for Education in International Media.

Liz Birge, assistant professor of journalism, William Patterson University, is spending the summer working as a feature reporter at the Star-Ledger in Newark, N.J.

Margo Wilson, assistant professor of journalism/English at California University of Pennsylvania, has been granted tenure.

Please join us

Leave room in your AEJMC conference calendar to attend SPIG's annual business meeting and social, starting on Friday, Aug. 10, at 8:30 p.m.

We will discuss such items as whether to continue with our research paper competition (we had just two papers accepted in our most recent contest). We also will elect officers.

If you have an interest in serving as a SPIG officer, please contact SPIG head Margo Wilson, wilson_m@cup.edu.

After the approximately one-hour business meeting, we will meet with colleagues from the Community College Journalism Association and adjourn to an area restaurant to socialize.

SPIG sessions at AEJMC (continued from page 2)

*** 9:30-ish pm to ??, Small Programs Interest Group and Community College Journalism Association Off-site Session Social.**
SATURDAY, Aug. 11:
*** 12:15-1:30 p.m., Scholar-to-Scholar Refereed Paper Research Session:**
 Relevance and Critical Thinking in the Journalism Curriculum: Harnessing the Power of Popular Culture to Discuss Media Approaches to Diversity
 Susan Brockus, California State, Chico
 Theory vs. Skills Courses in Small Programs

Robert Bergland, Ken Rosenauer and Ann Thorne, Missouri Western State
Discussant: Mary Carmen Cupito, Northern Kentucky University
*** 1:45-3:15 p.m., Teach-In: How to Teach the First Journalism Writing Class, co-sponsored by Community College Journalism Association.**
 Moderating/Presiding: **Cheryl Bacon, Abilene Christian**
 Panelists: **Rachele Kanigel, California State, San Francisco**

Jean Ann Colbert, Indiana Purdue, Fort Wayne
Cathy Johnson, Angelo State
Teresa Housel, Hope
*** 3:30-5 p.m., How To Publish Scholarly Research in Specialized Areas, co-sponsored by Religion and Media Interest Group.**
 Moderating/Presiding: **Linda Florence Callahan, North Carolina A&T State**
 Panelists: **Camilla Gant, West Georgia**
Guy Golan, Florida International
Kim Landon, Utica

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